Buddhism and Peace:
Peace in the World or Peace of Mind?
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"Let us strive for the achievement of both," is the likely answer most followers of Buddhism would give to the above question. There can hardly be any doubt that the Buddhist message is one of peace. In the first place, its proclaimed ultimate goal is the timeless peace of *nirvāna* which is a supramundane accomplishment. In order to achieve it by striving on the spiritual path, avoiding strife is a necessary precondition. This is not easy, because life in society at large and sometimes even within smaller units, such as families, is full of strife. Therefore individuals firmly committed to finding the final peace of liberation from the vicissitudes of samsāric life often became hermits or homeless wanderers. However, striving completely alone, without the guidance of an advanced teacher and the support of like-minded companions, is difficult. The Buddha, who had himself been through several years of solitary struggle for the solution to human suffering, therefore offered, on reaching liberation and enlightenment by his own labours, his guidance to other seekers who chose to become his followers and established for them a spiritual fellowship which gradually evolved into a monastic order. Exempt from involvement in family and social life and supported by donations, they could concentrate on their efforts to reach individual liberation and final peace. Their only contact with other people outside the monastic order was to collect alms from them and give them, in exchange, moral and spiritual guidance on a level on which they could understand it and thus be enabled to shape their lives accordingly, for their future benefit. The Buddha, too, rewarded his donors from different social classes, including royalty, with elucidation of the path to freedom and with ethical advice in precisely the form in which each individual recipient could take it up.

If most recipients had accepted these instructions and incorporated them earnestly into their daily lives as individuals and into the manner in which they were discharging their responsibilities in their families, in the wider community and in their handling of state affairs in the case of monarchs, peace would have prevailed wherever the Buddha or his accomplished disciples reached with their influence. But what was the reality? Has Buddhism ever succeeded in making the world, or at least the countries in which it took root, or perhaps just India where it originated, more peaceful?

As in the world at all times, strife and wars were common in the India of Buddha's time. There was a warrior caste within her social structure and rulers of different states fought with each other for supremacy and were gradually eliminating or absorbing by force smaller states, some of which were tribal confederacies with a kind of republican constitution. The Buddha actually did try to avert wars whenever there was an opportunity to influence a belligerent monarch. An instance when he prevented an imminent war is reported on at the beginning of the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (D 16,1,1-5=PTS II, pp. 72 ff). The king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, who was an admirer of the Buddha and trusted in his judgment, sent his chief minister Vassakāra to the Buddha with instructions to find out what the Buddha would say about Ajātasattu's intention to eliminate the state of Vajjī by force. The Buddha, who had once instructed the Vajjīs in the practice of seven conditions of welfare (*aparihānīyadhammā* - A 7,19=PTS IV, pp. 15 ff), first turned to Ānanda and asked him whether the Vajjīs still adhered to the practice of those conditions. Briefly expressed, they are:

(1) Holding frequent and well attended public meetings;
(2) making decisions and implementing them in concord;
(3) upholding traditions and honouring pledges;
(4) respecting elders of the community;
(5) refraining from abusing women by abduction or forced marriage;
(6) maintaining and respecting places of worship;
(7) supporting and protecting holy men.

On receiving affirmative answers to all of them, the Buddha said to Vassakāra that as long as this was the case, the Vajjīs would enjoy growth, not decline. Vassakāra then concluded that the only way the Vajjīs could be defeated was by treachery or discord and advised his king accordingly. The war was prevented for the time being, but, as the Commentary informs us (DA II, pp. 522 ff), after the Buddha's death the cunning Vassakāra utilised the hint implied in the Buddha's explanation and devised a plot which his king approved. On the pretence that Vassakāra sided with the Vajjīs, the king sent him into exile. Vassakāra then found refuge among the Vajjīs and became the educator of the children of some leading families. By cleverly manipulating different clans of the Vajjian confederacy he managed in time to bring discord among them so that they slackened in their vigilance. Ajātasattu, secretly advised by Vassakāra about a suitable time, arrived with a strong contingent, taking the Vajjīs by surprise, and annexed their territory.

Ajātasattu could be regarded as an archetype of a pragmatic, power hungry monarch or perhaps of a latter-day dictator who would not hesitate to utilise for his purposes his contacts with religious or spiritual figures of the time. When his father king Bimbisāra, a staunch supporter of the Buddha, still sat on the throne of Magadha, he allied himself with Devadatta, who decided to murder the Buddha when he refused to retire and pass the leadership of the order of monks to him. Bimbisāra was willing to abdicate in favour of his son, but Ajātasattu was persuaded by Devadatta to murder his father, lest he might foil his plot against the Buddha if he learned about it. In the event Devadatta did not succeed in his plot and Ajātasattu then greatly regretted his crime, confessed to the Buddha and became his supporter. The Buddha showed leniency towards him and once during the king's visit conducted the discourse about the fruits to be gained from renouncing the world which became known as Sāmaññaphala-sutta (D 2), but Ajātasattu was not moved to take such a decisive step to counteract the parricide he had committed and merely took refuge in the Buddha. He even failed to mend his ways substantially, as his actions after the Buddha's death, related above, testify (Cf. Rhys Davids, pp. 12 ff).

Another instance when the Buddha's message of peace failed to influence events even during his lifetime is the one reported in the commentary to the Dhammapada (DhA I, pp. 346-9; 357-61) which concerns the eradication of the Buddha's clan of Sakyas by the king of Kosala, Vidūdabha, the son of Pasenadi. He had a grudge against the Sakyas because they had once insulted his late father. Three times the Buddha averted the war by his presence at the borders, causing Vidūdabha to retreat with his army. The fourth time he was not there and Vidūdabha proceeded. When faced by his army, the Sākyans, by then deeply influenced by the Buddha's message of peace, stood their ground, but shot their arrows in the air, not wishing to kill anyone. Maybe they thought that their attitude would rub off on their adversary so that he would abstain from the attack, but he did not and a wholesale slaughter followed. This was to be and indeed has been the pattern in the history of mankind. Non-violence has never determined the course of history, the aggressors usually winning the day, even though they, too, are sometimes vanquished in the end.

The occasion of the distribution of the Buddha's relics after the cremation of his body is also a good example of the less than perfect understanding of his message of peace on the part of the claimants, some of them powerful rulers, like Ajātasattu, who were prepared to fight for their possession. They were eventually pacified by the brahmin Dona, a respected spiritual teacher, who had met the Buddha (A II, pp. 37 ff), although he never became his monk. He divided the relics into eight portions and himself kept the urn. The clan of Moriyas (Skt. Mauryas), probably the ancestors of the dynasty from which the great Asoka later emerged, were late-comers and received the ashes (D 2,16=PTS II, pp. 166 ff). (Of the original ten burial stūpas erected over the relics only one, that near Kapilavatthu, the capital of the Sakyas, was identified in modern times; what is believed to be the casket with their portion of the relics was dug out from underneath it by archaeologists only in 1976.)

Although the Buddha's original message promises final peace as an individual achievement in transcendence, the idea or vision of universal peace on earth emerged quite early in the Pali Buddhist tradition. It has the form of a legendary account of the rule of a righteous king (*dhammarāja*) who is accompanied by a precious wheel jewel (*cakkaratana*), a kind of mysterious symbol of the world ruler (*cakkavati*, the 'wheel turner', a title given also to the Buddha as the world teacher). At the beginning of his reign the righteous king travels the earth accompanied by the wheel and wherever he appears, local rulers acknowledge him as their overlord and he then rules over the whole known world in peace. Only if he slackens in virtue, does the wheel disappear and disorder and crime infect his realm. This is, of course, the stuff of mythology, a kind of collective wishful thinking.

The idea of a world ruler (Skt. *cakravarti*) is of obscure origin, but plays an important role also in Jain and Hindu traditions. In history, the first ruler deemed worthy of the title was the emperor Asoka (Skt. Aśoka, *c* 272-32 BC). He may have become an approximation to the ideal of a righteous ruler in his later life, but he did not acquire power over almost all India by the magic of the *cakkaratana*. He unified the country by bloody wars of conquest and only the horrors of the last one which won him the province of Kalinga (modern Orissa), made him embrace the Buddha's teaching. Thereupon he turned to 'conquest by law' (*dharma-vijaya*), disseminating the message of peace and religious tolerance by personally touring the country and lecturing and by his rock-carved edicts inside his realm and missions to neighbouring and even distant countries. He also encouraged popular worship by building new stūpas all over India in which he enshrined portions of the Buddha's relics taken from the original eight stūpas. As an experienced ruler, however, he made sure that his authority was respected and for that purpose he introduced a sophisticated network of enforcement officers and spies who reported directly to him (*dharma-mahā-mātras*) (Smith pp. 53, 88, 93, 95, 161 ff). He also maintained an efficient army. But after his death it soon became obvious that his preaching and edicts had not substantially influenced the people. Besides, he had no equally charismatic and determined successor, which is not unusual with great figures in history. Maybe the education which his sons and grandsons received made them unable to take the decisive measures needed to keep the country in shape and the court under control, as can be surmised from the well-known story about prince Kunāla, and so the realm began slowly to disintegrate. Still, the momentum lasted about half a century, whereupon the brahmin Puśyamitra, the commander-in-chief of the army, killed off the last reigning Maurya and founded a new (Hindu) dynasty styled Śunga. Nevertheless Buddhism, split into many sects, flourished in India for another twelve centuries, owing partly to the patronage of various regional rulers following the example of Asoka and partly to the reputation of the great monastic centres of learning, such as Nālandā.

The last great patron of Buddhism and the last indigenous emperor of India was Harsavardhana (606-646/7) who favoured Mahāyāna. Thereafter most rulers in the fragmented country came to the conclusion that their dynastic interests were better served by their alliance with the Brahminic tradition, while ordinary people, too, felt closer to brahmins living in the community with their families than to learned monks in their monastic isolation. As a result Buddhism was losing ground. It received the final blow in the form of the wholesale massacre of monks and destruction of monasteries and their libraries by the invading Islamic conquerors in the eleventh century.

The fact that Buddhism had owed its spread over virtually the whole of India to the overwhelming influence of Asoka's authority created a precedent which determined its future fortunes throughout Asia. It also created an inner tension within its monastic communities. First, there were those who understood its message of peace in the original sense as an individual path to liberation from the shackles of samsāric life, even though they also understood that they had the duty, motivated by compassion, to pass on the message and assist others in their practice. But this message was really only for a minority of followers of the Dhamma (Skt. Dharma) who grasped the otherworldly nature of the final goal. They were solitary practitioners in forest hermitages or inconspicuous incumbents of monasteries dedicated to meditational practice; sometimes they formed small groups headed by a meditation master. Second, there were those who joined one of the monastic institutions under royal patronage, perhaps with some awareness at the back of their minds of the ultimate purpose of monastic life, but meanwhile taking advantage of the status and prestige which monkhood gained by its link to the throne, to play a role in the political arena which they otherwise could not hope for. And there were also those whose main motivation for taking the robe was a comfortable life or sheer power. An important part of the monastic life was, of course, also learning: preservation and interpretation of the teaching which, however, soon led to the development of differing schools of thought and sectarian divisions. This was not a problem for the groups of the first category for whom meditational practices were the primary concern and doctrinal interpretations only a secondary and provisional matter. For the second type of monastics, however, doctrinal differences became a part of power politics and often led to strife.

The earliest example of the implantation of the Buddhist teaching in a new country by royal authority is the mission which Asoka sent to Sri Lanka *c* 250 BC under the leadership of his son Mahinda Thera. The Sinhalese king Devānāmpiya Tissa (247-207 BC), who was probably a relative of Asoka, embraced the new faith immediately, together with the whole court, and ordinations of new monks soon followed. Among them was one of the king's nephews who founded for them a monastery called Mahāvihāra near the royal palace in Anurādhapura which became the centre of Theravāda orthodoxy.

Some time after Tissa the island suffered invasions from South India and eventually Tamil rule was established in its northern half for 45 years under king Eḻara who adhered to the Brahminic tradition but respected existing Buddhist institutions and did not hinder popular Buddhist worship. A descendant of the Sinhalese dynasty from the southern part of the island eventually challenged Tamil rule, was victorious and as king Dutthagāmani Abhaya (*c* 161-137) decisively strengthened the Buddhist establishment by building and supporting monasteries. His motivation would have been naturally dynastic and nationalistic, but an important and possibly even decisive part was played by his conviction that as a patron of Buddhism he was responsible for establishing its supremacy over the island. The close links of monasteries to the throne led eventually to their first recorded direct interference in politics, with negative consequences. After the death of Dutthagāmani's successor

Sadhātissa (59 BC), influential monks supported the coronation of his younger son, expecting more material benefits from him than from his older brother. But the rightful heir recovered the throne by military campaign and then withdrew royal support from the Sangha for three years (Adikaram p. 73; Rahula pp. 69 & 81).

The country was weakened and when Vattagāmani Abhaya, the third son of Sadhātissa, inherited the throne (43 BC), he soon lost control and went into hiding as a result of Brahminic revolts combined with Tamil invasions. The country suffered from plunder and famine which led even to cannibalism. Many monks died and some fled to India. After fourteen years Tamil rule collapsed and Vattagāmani Abhaya regained the throne. He demolished the Jain Giri monastery (because he had heard from it a denigrating remark when fleeing his capital) and built Abhayagiri Vihāra in its place. Its monks then competed with Mahāvihāra and gave shelter to the Pudgalavāda doctrine brought from India by Vātsīputrīyas (P. Vajjiputakas), who were favoured by the king. In subsequent centuries it became a centre of Mahāyāna teachings. Still during the famine or soon after, the Theravāda Tipitaka (Pali Canon), up to that time handed down by word of mouth, was committed to writing by orthodox monks lest it be lost and also as a defence against sectarian teachings from India.

A drastic example of the perils which stemmed from the dependence of the Sangha on royal authority for resolving internal disputes is the execution of 60 monks (thrown over a precipice) under king Kanirajānu (AD 89-92); they had plotted to kill the king, because they disagreed with the way he settled a monastic dispute (Rahula p. 86). Under king Mahāsena (334-361/2) Sanghamitra, a monk from India, tried unsuccessfully to win Mahāvihāra for Mahāyāna teachings and was murdered at the instigation of one of the king's wives, as also was a minister friendly to him (Rahula p. 95). The vacillating king eventually showed favour to yet another Mahāyāna sect and built for it Jetavana Vihāra (Adikaram p. 92). In the reign of Silāmeghavanna (617-626) a monk named Bodhi was murdered even within the Abhayagiri Vihāra, because he complained to the king about loose morals in a large section of the monkhood. The king punished the guilty monks most severely and sent a hundred of them into exile. Monasteries could sometimes put pressure on the king by 'orthodox' means. When Dāhopatissa (650-658) wanted to build a new monastery for Abhayagiri Vihāra, Mahāvihāra monks objected and applied to him the symbolical act of 'turning down of the alms-bowl' (*pattanikkujanakamma*) amounting to 'excommunication' (by preventing him from gaining merit by supplying them with requisites). The king took no notice.

Sectarian divisions were finished by royal decree under Parakrāma Bāhu the Great (1153-1186) who ruled from Polonnaruva. He ordered unification of sects under the authority of Mahāvihāra. Theravāda tradition has remained dominant on the island ever since despite some temporary clandestine Tantric practices. Its reputation brought to Lanka in 1476 a delegation from Pegu in Burma seeking the renewal of unbroken ordination succession for its Sangha. Burma reciprocated in 1597 when the ordination succession on Lanka was lost owing to wars after the arrival of the Portuguese. The Sinhalese kingdom now retreated to Kandy and for a time prospered from the trade with the Dutch. This had a detrimental influence on the Sangha. Royal patronage secured a comfortable life for monks and led to low discipline. Ecclesiastics from aristocratic classes who did not care for proper ordination even raised families in monasteries and prevented ordination of lower classes. Several excursions to Burma and Siam (Thailand) were needed to renew the monastic succession, but problems arising from different class groupings led to the establishment of three monastic sects (*nikāyas*), virtually castes within the Sangha.

A lasting remedy came only after 1802 with British colonial rule, which introduced secular administration so that royal patronage ceased. Monasteries had to rely on the support of the population and this led to spiritual regeneration of the Sangha, helped also by enthusiasts and converts to Buddhism from the West and despite the somewhat privileged situation of Christian missions. A substantial section of the monkhood, however, resented the loss of state patronage. When the island gained independence (4.2.1948), many monks entered the political arena and enabled political victory for the party which promised state support for Buddhism. Behind the scene disputes about implementation of the policy were probably the motivation for the murder in 1959 of prime minister Bandaranaike by two prominent monks and a layman, although the full story has never been revealed. When thereafter, despite the efforts of the union of political monks from the three sects (so-called Trainikāyika Sangha Sabhā), a leftist coalition won the election in 1970 but did not implement promised revolutionary changes, extreme left elements with a substantial proportion of students and even a few hundred leftist monks, started an armed uprising. It was crushed, whereupon the government limited the right of monks to take part in politics. In 1972 Sri Lanka became a republic, but its new constitution enshrined the privileged position of Buddhism (and Sinhalese as the official language) which led to an armed conflict with the extreme Tamil organisation styled ‘Tigers’ which dominates the north of the island and some of its other parts and demands independence for them. Terrorist actions were carried out even in Colombo and Kandy. At present there is an uneasy truce while a solution is being negotiated. In essence, Buddhism is certainly a religion of peace, but the history of Lanka demonstrates that the way some of its followers perceive it may lead to devastating wars.

Buddhism started spreading into the territories of Farther India early. According to the Pali chronicles Dīpavamsa and Mahāvamsa, Asoka’s missionaries Sona Thera and Uttara Thera brought it to Suvannabhūmi (Skt. Suvarnabhūmi, ‘land of gold’), which was how countries of Farther India were referred to. According to the Burmese tradition they founded a monastery in Thaton. Buddhism, along with the Brahminic tradition, was spreading among people also through commercial contacts and Indian settlements, but the decisive factor was again royal patronage. In time there existed in Burma three Buddhist kingdoms, but they were almost constantly at war with each other. In 1057 Anawrahta of Pagan was converted to Buddhism by a monk sent from Thaton by the Mon king of Southern Burma. When his request for holy texts and relics was not immediately met, Anawrahta conquered Thaton and carried away, besides relics, the whole royal library; he also took to Pagan a large number of monks. It appears that many royal supporters of Buddhism ascribed to the possession of relics and texts and to the presence of monasteries in their territory magic powers which would secure for them a successful reign and even victory in battles. This tendency may have its origin as far back as the events surrounding the partitioning of relics of the Buddha described above.

The unification of Burma did not long outlast Anawrahta of Pagan and the subsequent history of Burma is again one of almost constant wars of conquest between kings, most of whom professed Buddhism. Buddhist monasteries usually did not suffer from these wars, because it was believed that they were protected by the magic powers of their monks. Their reputation of unbroken ordination succession made their royal patrons even more confident in their belligerent undertakings. When in 1597 king Razagyri of Arakan received a request to send a delegation of monks to Lanka to renew ordination succession there, he was pleased to oblige, whereupon he undertook a successful campaign against the kingdom of Pegu and then went on pilgrimage to the famous Mahāmuni Buddha statue, presumably to show gratitude for his victories.

Perhaps the most drastic example of a belligerent royal patron of Buddhism was the founder of the last Burmese dynasty, Alaungpaya (1752-60), who was a self-proclaimed *bodhisattva*, unified Burma in bloody wars and in 1759 attacked Ayutthaya in Thailand, which he did not regard as a true Buddhist kingdom. When he died, his son Hsinbyushin (1760-76) finished the task by almost totally destroying Ayutthaya in 1767 and deporting thousands of its inhabitants. He even melted down Buddha statues to extract gold from them. On return home, however, he reconstructed the Shwedagon Dagoba, which had been damaged by earthquake, and enlarged it.

Meanwhile monks, sheltered in monasteries from the vicissitudes of war that were causing untold suffering to people outside, invented their own internal war. It concerned the arrangement of their garment. For centuries the rule was that inside monasteries they bared their right shoulder, but covered it outside. At the beginning of the 18th century some monks started going out with the right shoulder bare even when collecting alms food, which traditionalists regarded as a breach of discipline. Only the king had the authority to settle the dispute and decisions of successive kings differed. The 'innovators' usually accepted the ruling when it went against them, but traditionalists did not, even when it meant execution. That was what disobeying a king's command led to and few kings made an exception for monks. As in Lanka, circumstances changed radically under British colonial rule. Left to its own devices and to material support from lay followers, the Sangha was eventually reformed, but many monks engaged in politics during the Burmese struggle for independence in the hope that the old times of financial security under state patronage would return. This hope was not fulfilled when independence came in 1948 with the introduction of a democratic government which was, however, toppled in 1962. The country, renamed Myanmar, is now under a brutal military rule. Popular and monastic Buddhism is allowed to function as long as it abstains from involvement in politics. This has enhanced meditation practice so that some Burmese meditation centres have acquired a high reputation even abroad, including among Western Buddhists.

The territory of Thailand was occupied from early times by the Buddhist kingdom Dvāravatī with a predominantly Mon population. Its beginnings go back to the legendary introduction of Buddhism to Suvannabhūmi by Asoka's mission. It was a veritable 'land of gold' which became rich by transit trade rather than by conquest and exercised great cultural influence further afield. Theravāda Buddhism spread from it to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Towards the end of the 13th century Dvāravatī was absorbed into the Thai kingdom of Sukhothai which had been founded by Thai migrants from southern China who quickly adopted the higher Buddhist civilisation of Dvāravatī. The most famous king of Sukhothai was Ramkhamhaeng (1279-1318) who won the neighbouring rival kingdom from its king in a duel on elephants. As king he created a federation partly by conquest and partly by diplomacy and then proved to be an outstanding and just ruler. As a devout Buddhist he once a week passed his throne for a day to some leading monk to preach from it. But the subsequent fortunes of this nearly ideal Buddhist kingdom demonstrate the sad fact that a state based on a peaceful ideology does not survive for long. The next ruler, Lo Thai (1318-1347), never used force and was granted the title *dharmarāja* by the Sangha, but lost his grip on all the provinces gained by his father. His son wrote in 1345 a classic cosmological text about the 'three worlds' (*Traiphuun*, Skt. *Traibhūmi*) in which he parallelled the hierarchical cosmos with social order on earth headed by the righteous king who would care for the material as well as spiritual welfare of his subjects, keeping in sight for them the goal of *nirvāna*. For himself, he chose the path to full buddhahood. When he became king (1347) with the title *mahādharmarāja*, ruling virtually only a city state, he observed the ten precepts like a monk and incorporated them into the administration, hoping that he would win back unfaithful vassals by his virtue. Instead his nominal vassal from Ayutthaya incorporated Sukhothai into his new powerful realm. Lo Thai offered no resistance. Legend has it that the outstanding gold-plated statue known as Phra Buddha Jinarāt shed tears of blood when finally the Sukhothai dream of a Buddhist kingdom of peace was shattered. (The statue is still venerated in Wat Mahathat in Pitsanuloke.)

Ayutthaya also conquered Angkor in Cambodia (1431/2) and brought back many Khmer courtiers, clerks, artists and craftsmen together with brahmins who served at the court ceremonial based on the idea of the divine status of the king (as *devarāja*), which involved prostrations of all subjects before him so that they would not see his face. But Lo Thai's *Traiphuun* was also used to legitimise the king's rule over the Buddhist population in whose eyes it was his possession of the Buddha's relics and sacred statues which gave him power. The end of the empire in 1767 at the hands of the Burmese has been described above. Remarkably, a provincial governor of paternal Chinese descent, who proved to be a military genius, managed to assemble a volunteer army and renew the Thai empire within four years, gaining even more territory. He ruled from Bangkok as Phraya Tak Sin. But exhausted from campaigning, he turned to prayer, fasting and meditation and came to believe that he had reached sanctity by 'entering the stream' (*sodaban*, P. *sotāpanna*). However, he still required full royal etiquette even from monks and those who dissented were whipped and condemned to forced labour. Some monks, however, conformed and even encouraged him out of opportunism. When he proved unable to conduct state affairs, he was deposed in an army coup.

The throne then fell to general Chakkri who had found, during his military campaigns under Tak Sin, a precious Buddha statue in Laos which was regarded as a good omen. It is now known as the 'Emerald Buddha' and is still the most valued national treasure of Thailand. Chakkri became the founder of the still reigning dynasty as Rāma I (1782-1809). Its most successful king was Rāma IV (1851-68), better known as King Mongkut, who had been a monk for 27 years before he was called to take the throne. Having reformed the Sangha, he now brought the country on the path of modern reforms thereby rescuing it from falling prey to competing colonial powers. He saw the justification of royal rule not in *Traiphuun* theories or possession of relics and sacred statues, but in the ruler's moral integrity, understanding of karmic laws and spiritual practice. Careful education produced able successors and although there have been ups and downs, Thailand under the Chakkri dynasty has perhaps been an example that in a limited way a balance can be reached, at least for a time, between state patronage and self-rule of the Sangha, with both having due regard for people's material and spiritual needs.

The complicated history of Buddhism in the rest of Southeast Asia defies a brief survey. It has been interlaced with Brahminic influences and both these forces produced some staggering achievements, such as the Hindu Angkor Wat (12th century) and the Buddhist Bayon in Cambodia. The latter was built by Jayavarman VII (1181-1218). He believed that he was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara, whose 216 giant faces (172 survive) forming the towers of Bayon and looking to four directions, oversaw his realm. In what is now central Vietnam there was the kingdom of Champa named after the Indian town Campā with trade links to Suvannabhūmi. The Buddha stayed in Campā a few times, and when there, he laid down some Vinaya regulations (Vin I, 312 & II, 307; S I, 195; A IV, 59 & 168; A V, 151 & 189). Champa was visited by the Chinese pilgrim Yijing (I-ching) towards the end of the 7th century. He found there Sarvāstivāda and Sammatīya (Pudgalavāda) schools of Buddhism. It was incorporated into Dai Viet (North Vietnam) in 1471.

Champa had received cultural stimulation from the Buddhist kingdom of Śrī Vijaya on Sumatra, famous for huge libraries of Buddhist texts. Yijing stayed there for several years and Atīśa (982-1054) for twelve before going to Tibet to reform its monastic system. Śrī

Vijaya was crushed by Choḻa power in 1025 and was totally obliterated during the subsequent time of Islamisation of the area. The same happened to the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom on Java which, however, has left to the world the greatest Buddhist monument, Borobudur. But its use for Buddhist purposes is not allowed in present-day Indonesia and it even became the target of an Islamist bomb attack.

The introduction of Buddhism to China is also connected to patronage by rulers, both in legend and history. It reached a peculiar form in that during the rule of some emperors it was possible to purchase a monastic rank through the services of the Imperial Bureau. But Buddhism as a popular religion increased its following especially in turbulent times, for example during the Three Kingdoms (221-265) and after their disintegration under Hun and Tartar attacks. Throughout Chinese history it is hardly possible to find an instance when Buddhism would have influenced events to bring peace to the country, but it provided an explanation for the untold miseries suffered by the people and gave them hope for an improved lot in future lives and therefore, in a way, some peace of mind. One peculiar development in Chinese Buddhism was its connection to martial arts practised by the Chan (Zen) school, which was a product of a kind of synthesis with Daoism. Its legendary founder Bodhidharma reputedly settled at the Shaolin monastery, which became a centre of martial arts; besides monks it now even trains bodyguards for government officials and newly rich entrepreneurs. An even more peculiar development in this respect occurred in Japan where Zen methods of training became popular with the warrior class of samurai. The capacity for perfect concentration with a simultaneous detachment from emotional involvement and personal indifference to the outcome of the combat with respect to his own survival made a samurai into a formidable warrior unaffected by bloodshed and any kind of danger. Respite between battles allowed him temporary contemplation of beauty in nature or in works of art or relaxation during the tea ceremony. Those things aided his recovery and prepared him for further engagement on the battlefield.

Buddhism was brought to Japan, to begin with, by missions sent by the kings of Korea, which was suffering from frequent Japanese invasions. The hope was that Buddhism would pacify the lust of Japan’s rulers for conquest. The missions themselves were successful, subsequently strengthened by Japanese contacts with China, but the Korean hope was never fulfilled. The great protagonist of Buddhism in Japan, the learned prince Shotoku (593-622) was serious enough and tried, by example, to incorporate non-violence even into political practice. He became regent when the previous emperor was murdered in factional struggles, but he spared the murderer, enabling him to realise the wrongness of his deed in the light of the Buddha’s teachings. After his death the prince was hailed as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. But his example was not followed. His son and all members of his family were murdered by members of the Soga clan, although they were supporters of Buddhism. They in turn were exterminated by Shotoku’s party, which resulted in imperial absolutism.

Buddhism benefited outwardly from imperial patronage, but its purity as a spiritual message suffered. Monks had access to high offices in government and many concentrated on political careers. Some monasteries became large land owners and towards the end of the Kamakura period (1185-1333) got involved in power struggles, eventually deteriorating into armed conflicts, with the aristocratic cliques, with the court and even among themselves. A number of them virtually ceased to be monasteries, were run by married abbots as family estates and maintained hired troops. Sometimes even monks fought on battlefields. An example is the originally peaceful Jōdo Shinshu sect founded by Shinran (1173-1262), who started the tradition of married priesthood. It split into ten subsects headed by Shinran’s descendants residing in fortified temples who fought for power and possessions. In contrast, celibate monks of the older Jōdo sect, founded by Shinran's teacher Honen (1133-1212), were gaining ever more popularity by spreading its doctrine and practice through preaching and serving their followers with rituals. Their temples were becoming rich by donations, but attracted the envy of the rival militarised sects. Many were looted and burned down. Jōdo Shinshu was eventually regenerated in the wake of reform efforts of Rennyo Shōnon (1415-1499) for which he suffered at the hands of adversaries. His temple in Kyōto was burnt down and he barely saved himself. When he gained a large following in the provinces and built a new temple, it, too, was burned down. He then remained itinerant till he died, although the emperor rebuilt for him his original temple in Kyōto.

When a powerful Shingon (Tantric) sect, which controlled 2700 temples and armed its forces with European rifles, attacked the new castle of the rising general Hideyoshi (1536-1598), it suffered a crushing defeat. In the ensuing war all monasteries with armies were destroyed and their inmates killed. Peasants who had suffered oppression under the monasteries, often joined in the slaughter. Hideyoshi appeased his conscience by having captured weapons melted down for a large statue of the Buddha. Zen monasteries had been spared because they were not fortified and did not maintain armies, although they did meddle in politics.

Comparable engagement of Buddhist institutions in warfare as in Japan has its parallel only in Tibet. As elsewhere, Buddhism came to be established there by royal patrons who nevertheless maintained links with the ancient religion and with Bon for the purposes of funeral and court rituals. But one king, gLang-dar-ma (836-842), resented the growing power of monasteries, endowed by his predecessors, and tried to eradicate Buddhism by demolishing monasteries and forcing monks into humiliating occupations. When he was killed by Lha-lung dPal-gyi rDorje, a Buddhist monk disguised as a Bon priest, there was no strong claimant to the throne. The country was fragmented under local chiefs and eventually annexed by Mongols (1207). By political manoeuvring a Sakya-pa abbot gained from the Mongol Khan the appointment as regent of the whole of Tibet. This arrangement continued when Mongols formed the Chinese dynasty Yuan (1279-1368), but inside Tibet disputes started between sects resenting the political power of the Sakya-pas and the then regent, Lama Byang-chub rGyal-mtshan (1302-1364), resorted to military suppression of rebel monasteries.

When the Mongols lost China, Tibet became independent and the descendants of the ancient royal line, who were administrators of gTsang province and patrons of the Kagyu-pa sect, proclaimed the renewal of the monarchy. But the Gelug-pa *tulku* bSod-nams rGya-mtsho (1543-1588) turned to a powerful Mongol ruler, Altan Khan, virtually renewing Tibet's vassal relation to Mongols, and obtained from him the title Dalai Lama which he projected retrospectively onto the two previous abbots of his monastery (whose reincarnation he was, according to the *tulku* theory). He thus counted as the third Dalai Lama, but died before he could assume power in Tibet. His reincarnation was conveniently found in one of Altan Khan's great grandsons who was installed as the fourth Dalai Lama Yon-tan rGya-mtsho (1589-1617) in Lhasa with Mongol military assistance. The Kagyu-pas were alarmed, the king attacked Lhasa and the Dalai Lama fled, but soon died. When his reincarnation was found, the gTsang royal clan and the Kagyu-pas were willing to acknowledge him as the spiritual head if the Gelug-pas would renounce claims to worldly power and all sects would obtain equal status. But the Gelug-pas refused and, allied with the powerful Mongol Gushri Khan, crushed in bitter fighting allied gTsang and Kagyu forces. The fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang bLo-bzang rGya-mtsho (1617-82) was installed in 1642 as both secular and spiritual head of Tibet, making it into a kind of theocracy under nominal Mongol suzerainty. Tibet thus lost forever, with dire consequences, the chance to become again a sovereign kingdom with a secular royal line.

'The Great Fifth' consolidated the power of the Gelug-pa, but then showed tolerance towards all sects. He even extended Tibet by conquest and after Gushri's death (1654) Tibet became virtually independent. Under the sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs-dbyangs rGya-mtsho (1683-1706), who was a playboy and a poet, factional fights were resolved by the Mongol Khan Habzang who occupied Lhasa, killed the regent and became the ruler of Tibet under Chinese suzerainty. The Dalai Lama died while being transported to China. The Gelug-pas then turned to another Mongolian faction which conquered Lhasa and killed Habzang (1717), but did not recognise Chinese suzerainty. The emperor therefore sent an army to Tibet which brought with it from Chinese captivity the seventh Dalai Lama bsKal-bzang rGya-mtsho (1708-57), drove the Mongolians out and remained permanently stationed in Lhasa together with two Imperial residents. Subsequent Tibetan uprisings (1728-9 and 1747-50) were suppressed and in 1792 the Chinese forces pushed back an invasion of Ghurkhas from Nepal who had been invited by the Kagyu-pas in the hope of depriving the Gelug-pas of political power. Emperors subsequently regulated even the procedure of finding reincarnations of the Dalai Lama. At the present time Tibet suffers more under the Chinese communist regime than ever before.

As to Korea, Buddhism found a footing in it under royal patronage in the time of the Three Kingdoms whose dynasties vied for supremacy over the peninsula. Buddhism in its Chinese imperial ceremonial guise promised greater prestige. This was recognised first by the king of Koguryŏ (Goguryeo) who asked a minor Chinese ruler for missionaries; they came in AD 372 headed by the Chinese monk Shundao. But the king of Paekche (Baegje) did better by inviting the famous Indian monk Maranat'a (Marandha) who was active in the Nanking area and came in 384 with ten monks of Chinese and Indian origin.

Silla accepted Buddhism officially as late as 528, although the royal family may have been converted as early as 424, but it then became identified with the nation's interests when Master Chajang (Jajang) Yulsa returned after seven years of study from China. He instigated the building of a nine-storey pagoda which became the symbol of his ambition to make Silla into an exemplary Buddhist country entitled to the leading role in the whole peninsula. He was instrumental in forging a tactical alliance with the Tang Dynasty (618-907) in China against the other two Korean kingdoms and thus in the unification of Korea (668) by force, which, of course, was not exactly in the spirit of the peaceful message of Buddhism. When the former Chinese ally was expelled (676), there followed prosperity and a great flowering of Buddhist culture which continued during the Koryŏ (Goryeo) period (918-1392) despite Mongolian occupation and forced participation of the country in Kublai Khan's doomed plans to invade Japan. Royal patronage brought great riches to monasteries and, besides, many monks held high and lucrative positions in the governmental structure. But despite competition between sects there were no armed conflicts between Buddhist factions in Korea, such as we saw in Japan. However, resentment on the part of the aristocracy brought about a military coup (1170) and the introduction of Confucian administration, later fully implemented under the Chosŏn dynasty (Joseon, 1392-1910). This, in fact, benefitted the true calling of Buddhism. Banned from politics and living mainly in monasteries located in mountain valleys, monks could concentrate on learning, meditation and service to the population.

There was, however, an overriding occasion, a national crisis, when monks' active involvement in war did occur. It was during the infamous and destructive Imjin wars (1592-1598) waged by the virtual ruler of Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598). Spurred by

Japanese outrages, which included destroying temples and abducting or killing monks, many monks joined the 'Righteous Volunteer Army'. The following example illustrates well their dilemma. When a Japanese unit was approaching P'yohunsa in Mt. Kŭmgang, all the monks ran away except one Yujŏng (Yujeong) who remained composed and faced the soldiers sitting in the lotus posture. Stunned by his calm, they paid their respects to him and left. Later he lost his composure and burst into tears on learning about Japanese atrocities elsewhere; he formed a unit of fellow monks which eventually became one thousand strong and joined the fighting (Yu Sŏngnyong 2002).

This quick survey demonstrates that, as stated above, the world of *samsāra* is a world of strife and non-violence and peaceful ideologies never win on a larger scale, let alone globally. The Buddhist message is, indeed, one of peace. Nowhere in authentic Buddhist sources is there advocacy for war, not even a just one. And whatever wars were fought in Buddhist countries, they were never religious; their motivation was political and economic. The Buddha's message of peace was addressed primarily to the individual. He should preserve his inner peace under any circumstances and endure atrocities with calm and self-control, as described in the Kakacūpama Sutta (M 21) where a monk is advised to preserve his peace of mind without any thought of enmity or revenge even if his limbs were to be sawn off one by one by villains. To begin with, Yujŏng as a genuine follower of the Buddha's teaching acted in the spirit of this injunction. But even he was eventually overwhelmed by feelings of outrage. This happens only too easily to lay Buddhists, and sometimes even monks, who find themselves unable to live up to the calling, because they still cling to the idea that this world could and should be made into a pleasant and peaceful abode. It means that the crucial message of Buddhism, namely that the samsāric world can never become a peaceful place for all and that true peace, the peace of *nirvāna*, lies in transcendence and is attained only individually, has not truly sunk in.

The dream of a fully pacified world manifested itself in later Mahāyāna Buddhism in the Bodhisattva vow to save the whole world - all beings down to the last blade of grass. It would mean the transformation of the whole samsāric universe into a spiritual realm, an impossible undertaking if taken literally. After all, there has been enough time for one of the innumerable *bodhisattvas* to accomplish the task, yet the world with its upheavals and mankind's never ending strife is still here without any prospect of its promised transformation. Besides, the ancient Buddhist cosmology envisages a never-ending sequence of evolutions and devolutions of the universe as a stage for the drama played out by its inhabitants in successive lives from which only some individuals escape, by becoming, through their own effort, either Buddhas and teachers of others, *paccekabuddhas* (Skt. *pratyekabuddhas*), i.e. solitary liberated ones, or *arahats* as disciples of a Buddha. The Bodhisattva vow originally meant an act of aspiration to crown one's spiritual journey by assuming the role of a teacher as one in the long line of Buddhas in a future world period, before one's final withdrawal into transcendence (referred to as *parinibbāna*, Skt. *parinirvāna*). The promise to liberate all beings down to the last blade of grass must therefore be regarded as a metaphor to be understood philosophically. If we take a cue from the Vijñānavāda school of philosophy with its theory of *ālaya vijñāna* ('storehouse consciousness'), a kind of cosmic germinal depository of all possible things and events, we can attempt an interpretation. Living beings perceive sections of *ālaya vijñāna* according to the stage of development they have reached and assemble them into their environment, each one with an individual slant, and influence them by their activities which often means defiling them by their cankers (*āsavas*, Skt. *āravas*). This is fed back into *ālaya vijñāna* and determines the future shape of the world into which they are reborn. The worlds into which they are born are ‘private’, of their own making, although they overlap owing to their shared basis in *ālaya vijñāna*. When one being reaches liberation, he has stopped assembling sections of *ālaya vijñāna* into a (projected) world coloured by his cankers so that he no longer creates an environment for himself; he has, metaphorically speaking, liberated the world (his world) and no longer defiles *ālaya vijñāna* with it. He is above *ālaya vijñāna* since *nirvāna* is a transcendent dimension. A Boddhisattva who has vowed to help others and reached the stage of liberation in the tenth *bhūmi*, can then supposedly enter the universal *ālaya vijñāna* as well as the ‘private’ (projected) worlds (‘slices’ of *ālaya vijñāna*) of other individual beings and give them guidance. But it is inconceivable that he would save them all together with their worlds ‘down to the last blade of grass’. He has saved all those beings he himself would have become in future, together with their samsaric worlds, which would have been assembled from *ālaya vijñāna* seeds by him in his future lives if he had not reached liberation but continued his involvement in purely samsāric pursuits. Thus the final peace remains an individual achievement even if it is admitted that accomplished *bodhisattvas* can reach into samsāric dimensions to give guidance to beings entangled in them. This is in fact a redefinition of the liberation reached by *arahats*. The achievement is the same, the only innovation is the supposed ability of accomplished *bodhisattvas* to stroll into samsāric worlds of unliberated beings and give them assistance. This, however, is an ability with which *arahats* even in some Mahāyāna circles are credited. (One charming example of this tradition can be viewed in a depiction, with accompanying doctrinal explanation, on the Web site ‘The Assembly at Vulture Peak: The Eighteen Arahats’; but cf. Waters.)

Whatever the doctrinal intricacies there are if we delve into the philosophical systems of Buddhism, the basic fact remains that Buddhism is a doctrine of peace on all levels. Even before the final peace of *nirvāna* is reached by an individual, he can achieve peace of mind even in the turbulent world of *samsāra* amidst personal vicissitudes as illustrated by Kakacāpama Sutta. True Buddhism has not established peace in the world during its 2,500 years of existence and cannot impose it on an unwilling mankind, but it has never been a cause or advocate of war. In sharp contrast, theistic traditions sanction wars for religious purposes. Jehovah directed his chosen people to take the promised land by merciless conquest; it is still being fought over. Islamic *jihad* to glorify Allah has been fought against the infidel on three continents for centuries and is still with us. Religious wars within Christianity died down only with the so-called European enlightenment of the eighteenth century, although sporadic violence motivated by religion still occurs, like in Northern Ireleand, and, curiously enough, also in Korea where Christianity is young and therefore some of its sections are prone to militancy. In Europe Christianity largely lost its appeal and remaining believers focus on aspects of individual piety and communal welfare. This is only possible under secular governments which alone can enforce peace when theistic religions or their sects stir trouble. Whether a relatively peaceful coexistence of religions similar to that prevailing in the West under secular democratic governments might become possible worldwide will remain unforeseeable as long as theistic religions, each of which claims for itself the exclusive possession of truth, retain their grip on large sections of mankind. Buddhism does appear to be gaining individual adherents around the globe, but on the global scene its message of peace remains, sadly, as powerless now as it has been in all known history.

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Abbreviations:

A	Anguttara Nikāya
D	Dīgha Nikāya
DA	Dīgha Nikāya Atthakathā
DhA	Dhammapada Atthakathā
P.	Pāli
Skt.	Sanskrit
Vin	Vinaya Pitaka